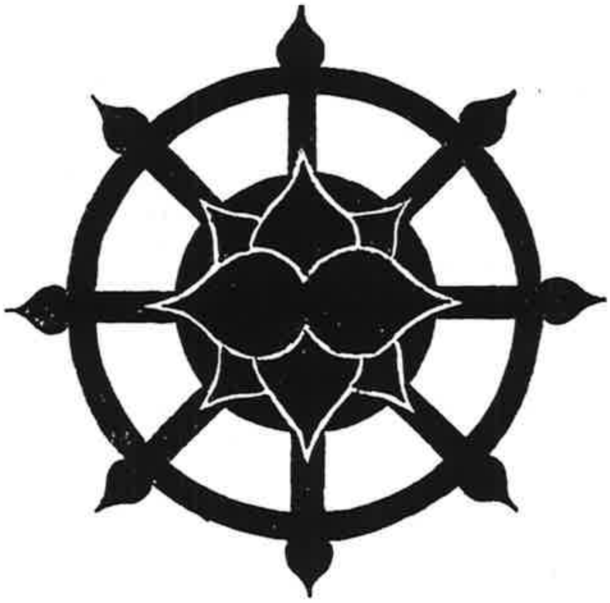
V I P A S S A N Ā - S Ā R A



JAARGANG I

Uitgave 2.

Vipassanā - sāra

wat in het Nederlands Vipassanā (Inzichts) bode betekent, is een uitgave van de Jonge Boeddhisten, met als doel de mensen die Vipassanā beoefenen van juiste en nuttige informatie te voorzien.
Naast feitelijke info zoals de data, tijden, plaatsen, kosten etc. van meditatie-aktiviteiten is er ruimte voor artikels, verslagen die betrekking hebben op deze aktiviteiten, d.w.z. Vipassanā - meditatie en in ruimere zin boeddhisme in het algemeen.

De Vipassanā-sāra verschijnt driemaal per jaar. Aangezien de informatie dan ruim vier maanden van tevoren verzameld wordt, kunnen er eventueel tussentijdse veranderingen plaatsvinden.

Het volgende nummer is te verwachten in januari/februari.

In deze uitgave een artikel samengesteld uit lezingen van de Eerw. Mettaviharee door Hans Kwik.

De Vipassanā-sāra zal verspreid worden via de plaatsen waar wekelijks gemediteerd wordt, mochten mensen het thuisgestuurd willen hebben, bel dan even Johan of Aad.
De abonnementsprijs is gesteld op fl 7,50 per jaar, het jaar loopt van september tot september.
Je kunt je als lid opgeven door bovengenoemd bedrag te storten op bank of gironr. van de J.B. onder vermelding van "Vip. sāra".

Samenstelling van de redaktie:
als vaste krachten Johan Tinge en Aad Verboom;
aan deze uitgave werkten verder mee: Hans, Hein, Henk en Niek.

Info: Aad 030 - 888655
Johan 050 - 719073
Postadres: S.J.B.N. (Stichting Jonge Boeddhisten Nederland) Postbus 1519
3500 BM Utrecht.
Postgiro: 52.32.118
bank: 55.51.05.563.

V I P A S S A N Ā -- S A M A T H A

the main differences

Those who frequently attend the Venerable Mettaviharee's discourses or interviews after meditation-sessions undoubtedly know that he stresses the importance of a good understanding of the differences between Vipassanā- and Samatha practice. This understanding should not be only theoretical, but above all it should be an understanding in action.

This treatise, which is primarily based on discourses delivered during retreats in 1983 and 1984, is an attempt to clarify the main differences. May it contribute to a quick and profound comprehension of the Path leading to the end of suffering, i.e. Vipassanā-bhāvanā (bhāvanā is mental development).

Before marking the differences, it may be helpful to characterize both ways of meditation or mental development separately. For further detail and explanation of techniques it is recommendable to read the books and booklets mentioned at the end of this article.

SAMATHA - BHĀVANĀ

Practising Samatha meditation is a way to cultivate mental concentration. Concentration can be defined as the ability of the mind to focus itself on a certain object with gradual exclusion of all other affairs. The opposite of concentration is distractedness. In the direction of Samatha practice one cultivates the ability to concentrate oneself to high degrees, from everyday-level to approaching concentration, from approaching concentration to excess concentration, until finally the highest stage of mental absorption is achieved, one - pointedness or complete oneness with the chosen object.

The mind stands still on the object, without wavering, as if it were glued on the object.
The state of one-pointedness is called samādhi, the degree of mental absorption is called jhāna (pronounce dzjāna).
When samādhi is very strong and if it can be maintained for a considerably long period, it becomes extraordinary mental concentration; this enables the meditator to obtain special psychic powers, like clairvoyance, clairaudience, healing etc.

The object of concentration can be almost anything, provided that it leads to more positive states of minds: it can be something in connection with the body, it can be a feeling or a visualization.

Traditionally in Theravāda-Buddhism there are forty methods of culturing the mind in the direction of Samatha practice. A few examples:
Ānāpānasati, the building up of samādhi by concentrating on inhaling and exhaling,
Mettā-bhāvanā, the cultivating of loving-kindness towards all living beings and
Buddhānussati, attaining samādhi by reflecting on and visualizing the positive qualities of the Buddha.

A mind gradually being absorbed in the object of concentration is a mind that is being obsessed by something outside of it, even if the mind itself has created the object, for there is no concentration without something to concentrate upon.
So a person who develops the mind according to one of these forty methods, cannot do without the selected concentration-object in order to achieve positive states of mind.

When the mind is directed to one-pointedness, it will after a while become empty of thought, there is no conditioning, no worrying, no drowsiness, no restlessness; what remains is a feeling of great happiness (rapture or bliss); you feel very great, very absolute, strong even. But this is only temporary. When samādhi ceases, you still may feel very bright, very refreshed, like waking up from deep sleep, but all conditioning, thoughts and feelings come back again, the same as before.

In practising Samatha all outer and inner contacts must be avoided. For instance, noise is disturbance, touch is disturbance, pain and thoughts are disturbances. One has to find a place where outer contact is reduced to a minimum, for a period long enough to blot out all inner disorder; otherwise the practice will succeed only partially, if not at all. In this way strong mental discipline alone is not enough for practising Samatha successfully; favourable circumstances are just as much required.

VIPASSANĀ - BHĀVANĀ

In practising Vipassanā the most important mental factor is mindfulness (Pali: sati).
You have to be alert, very attentive, you have to respond to what is happening in a proper way.
The opposites of mindfulness are forgetfulness, dullness and ignorance. Distractedness or the turning of the attention in another direction (the opposite of concentration) is not necessarily opposite to mindfulness. The turning of the attention in a different direction can be done with or without acknowledging this. When you are acknowledging, mindfulness is there, you know what is happening, you are able to tell afterwards exactly what was going on and in what order it was taking place.

When there is no acknowledging, there is no mindfulness, only a rather vague awareness which does not allow you to record events properly.

Practising Vipassanā is a means to establish mindfulness gradually on what is here and now. The meditator is not yet really practising Vipassanā as long as mindfulness has not been established. We better call this kind of training the practice of mental development by which you can increase the power of the mind inside yourself, in the direction that will lead you to freedom.

The meditator has to be very up to date because it is necessary to make constant efforts to keep the mind in the present, so that recognition is possible, of what is happening from moment to moment, not before or after: so in fact the meditator has to be more than up to date, he has to be up to the moment.

Since it is rather hard to be constantly attentive in this manner, it will occasionally be very helpful to have the support of concentration on a particular object. The object must be one that is always present and easy to concentrate on.

In sitting-meditation this object can be found in the rising of the abdomen when one breathes in and the falling of the abdomen when one breathes out. By doing so the meditator increasingly becomes aware of what is happening besides the rising and falling of the abdomen, including the less obvious, latent feelings and sensations.

What is the best way to keep the mind in the present? In order not to become dull or forgetful you need activity. The activity required for Vipassanā-practice is *"naming"* or the making of mental notes on what is happening.

The making of mental notes is much more subtle than naming because you do not have to look for the words. But in the beginning the meditator should stick to the naming. How to put this into practice?
When the abdomen rises because of breathing in the meditator mentally says "rising", when the abdomen falls because of breathing out the meditator must mentally say "falling".

In case there is awareness of a sound the meditator must mentally repreat "hearing" a few times. This has to be done before the sound starts to afflict the mind, otherwise the naming "hearing" is too late and inaccurate; the mind can become involved in the sound, a liking or disliking of the sound can be generated. When this happens the naming "imagining", "liking" or "disliking" is more to the point.

At the moment the sound is no longer the most obvious object to the mind, the meditator concentrates again on the rising and falling of the abdomen or on any other object which demands attention.

The naming should be directed to whatever is most prominent on a given moment, it should be directed to only one object at a time and moreover it should be continuous. In the same way it needs to be quick, accurate and appropriate. The events need to be called by their appropriate names, that is to say, the meditator may choose any word to suit his convenience as long as it conveys to him the meaning of what he is aware of.

Mindfulness is established in this way.

This establishment of mindfulness in the direction of Vipassanā-practice can be arranged in four categories or foundations, namely

the foundation of
- body
- feeling
- thought
- mental conditioning or mental reacting.

The noticing of the rising-falling in the sitting-meditation, of the footstep - right goes thus, left goes thus - in walking-meditation, in fact the noticing of all impressions pertaining to the body, is the establishing of mindfulness on the body.

The establishing of mindfulness on the feeling can be defined as the noticing of sensations like cold - hot, itching, pain or anything else like that; it does not matter whether they are agreeable, disagreeable or neutral, it is just feeling.

The recognition of thought, seeing its arising and passing away, moment by moment without commenting on it, is the establishing of mindfulness on thought.

Feeling or sense-contact can be defined as the establishing of mindfulness on the conditioning of the mind. This conditioning causes many mental afflictions, like anger, desire, hatred, distress or discontentment to come into existence.

The act of naming, provided that it is quick and accurate, not only keeps the mind in the present, by which it is able to perceive clearly what is going on each moment, but it also helps to refrain your senses, which means that you are not being involved in what is happening. The events can not overpower you because you can disconnect yourself from them, no matter how disturbing or frightening they may seem.
Although continuous naming is a hard and not always agreeable piece of work, which appears to be more compulsory than free, it will unquestionably lead to real mental freedom. All this hard work will eventually bear its fruit.

As a matter of course all compulsiveness and artificiality will disappear once naming has been developed into noting (mere acknowledging), once mindfulness has been established, i.e. when there is no need to force its operation.

The power within yourself has become great enough to cope with all kinds of affairs, whether they be mental or material. At that moment Vipassanā is working most effectively.

There are two more terms which I would like to discuss now, namely Wisdom (Pali paññā), which is what has to be developed by Vipassanā-practice, and Purification (Pali visuddhi).

To start with the latter: Purification.

As a result of continuous mindfulness you will be faced with a lot of latent tendencies, like the tendency to become easily angry, the tendency to daydream or to be gloomy. These tendencies, basically caused by ignorance, are very obstinate and unwholesome because they bring about a lot of suffering, although you may not be aware of this in daily life. In fact in daily life you constantly confirm and reinforce these tendencies, you are so much attached to them that they have become a habit. The only way to deal with them successfully is to name them in the previously explained manner.

In short: through the power of mindfulness together with the power of brief and quick but well-directed concentration (the naming or noting) you are able to see your personal peculiarities in the way they are and as soon as they arise; at the same time a disconnection has been brought about between you and your "own" peculiarities.

You do not take so much interest in them anymore and they, not being able to overpower you, will eventually leave you alone. Gradually the mind will become more balanced, more relaxed.
By the combined power of these mental faculties all further defilements like wrong view and wrong intention can be completely removed and can be prevented from arising.

Purification of mind is effected in this way.

In a well-balanced and purified mind Wisdom can come to growth. Wisdom in Buddhist sense is the ability to see things in their true nature, without distorting them according to your own disposition and without having problems with them.

So it is something very practical, which can not be learned from books - on the contrary - it is something which has to be experienced in action.

This demands further explanation.

What has to be understood by the ability to see things in their true nature?

Strong mindfulness supported by brief and quick concentration enables the mind to distinguish clearly between bodily and mental events as well as to experience directly that all things are subject to change, not only on a gross level but especially on a subtle level.

The meditator will notice rapid changes of mood, he will notice that the body-system changes constantly. When mindfulness is sharp the meditator can see hundreds of changes in one instance. Normally the mind is too slow to be aware of this.

Most people know that thanks to the slowness of the human eyes we are capable of watching television.

An illusion of reality is created, though we are only looking at rapid change in the pattern of coloured dots. This illusion of reality will come to an end when we move towards the screen or when the transmission-signal is too weak for a consistent image. The image will lose its power to arouse our interest.

Likewise, but now thanks to an improved inner eye, the meditator directly experiences impermanence in Vipassanā-practice and loses interest in the flux of mind and matter. All phenomena in this flux tend to pass away as soon as they have arisen, they come into existence in interdependence, their appearance is beyond volitional control.

Nothing in this flux can be clung to, nothing in it can be claimed as your own.

Experiencing this lack of consistency weakens and eventually breaks the illusion of a permanent self or soul, which "self" is nothing but a series of wrong ideas or conditioning(s).

Most people, however, do not accept impermanence in their lives. They may accept it rationally, as an idea, but they do not do so within their hearts. Nearly all activities are intended to safeguard their way of being. They want to get something out of life for themselves, lasting happiness, lasting joy, lasting satisfaction, lasting peace, lasting power, whatever it may be, and they want to get rid of things which are disagreeable to them. The more one strives for happiness in this way, the more suffering will be there, the more unhappiness will be the result because one's efforts are against the nature of things.

Suffering is very vast because this wrong attitude towards life permeates almost all activities and intentions.

The less struggle against impermanence, the less suffering will be the result; it will finally come to an end when the clinging is rooted out completely; the end of suffering will be there because there is no "sufferer", there is no one to say "this suffering, this pain is bad because it is mine."

Summarized:

The ability to see things in their true nature is the direct perception or understanding of suffering, impermanence and no-self.

The meditator has to see these three characteristics at the same time in order to have a direct experience of the Four Noble Truths*, the ceasing of all suffering which is absolute freedom.

The meditator then has a glimpse of Nibbāna, the final goal of all Vipassanā-practice.

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* The Four Noble Truths are:
1. there is suffering
2. there is the origination of suffering
3. there is the ceasing of suffering
4. there is the Way leading to the ceasing of suffering.

Boekenlijst:

Vipassana meditation and its knowledge, door de Eerw. Mettaviharee.
The heart of buddhist meditation, door de Eerw. Nyānaponika Thera.
What the Buddha taught, door de Eerw. Walpola Rahula.
Self-study practical Insight-meditation, door Dhanit Yupho (niet in de boekhandel verkrijgbaar).

In het meditatie-centrum op de Prinsengracht 475 worden momenteel enige kursussen verzorgd; de "Thaise les voor beginners" is sinds enige tijd aan de gang, maar men kan zich hier nog bij aansluiten.
Tijd: donderdags 17.00 - 18.30 uur
kosten: ongeveer fl 2,- per keer.

Daarnaast is woensdag 9 oktober een kursus "Abhidhamma voor beginners" van start gegaan.
Tijd: woensdags om de twee weken van 19.00 - 21.00 uur
kosten: fl 5,- per keer.

Sinds kort is in Amsterdam gevestigd de Stichting Vipassanā Meditatie Centrum, opgericht ten behoeve van een nieuw, groter centrum in Nederland.
O.a. de Eerw. Mettaviharee heeft zitting in het bestuur.
Mocht u dit nieuwe centrum financieel willen steunen:

Amrobank, Rozengracht 88 te Amsterdam
postgiro bank 2391
t.b.v. rnr. 45.83.27.948 (Stichting Vipassana meditatie centrum).

MEDITATIE - CENTRUM GRONINGEN

Deze zomer zijn de werkzaamheden aan Parallelweg 14 van start gegaan, waar de Vipassanā-aktiviteiten in de toekomst naar verplaatst zullen worden. Er is vanaf 19 augustus drie weken hard gewerkt met als resultaat dat het grote dak bijna geheel vernieuwd is. Het ligt in de bedoeling per januari 1986 een meditatie-zaal beneden klaar te hebben, waar de weekenden georganiseerd kunnen worden.

Voor het zover is, moet er echter nog heel wat werk verzet worden; er zullen dan ook regelmatig werk-weekenden of -weken georganiseerd worden.
Mensen die hiervoor tijd kunnen vrijmaken, kunnen hierover informatie verkrijgen bij:
Paul Boersma, tel. 050 - 716083 of
Hein en Sandra Kockelkoren, tel. 050 - 417184.

NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO SAMMA-SAMBUDDHASSA

Onverwacht is uit ons midden heengegaan, onze welbeminde kalyāṇamitta,

de Eerwaarde Bhikkhu SUMAṄGALA Maha Thera

op de leeftijd van 70 jaar, op 2 september 2528/1985.
Zijn favoriete Pali-vers, waarnaar hij geleefd heeft en gestorven is, was:

Aniccā vata saṅkhārā uppāda vayadhammino,
uppajjitvā nirujjhanti tesaṃ vūpasamo sukho.
Sabbe sattā maranti ca, mariṃsu ca marissare
tathevāhaṃ marissāmi, natthi me eta saṃsayo.

Conditions truly they are transient,
with the nature to arise and cease;
having arisen, then they pass away,
their calming, cessation-happiness.
All kinds of beings surely come to death,
they have always died, will always die,
in the same way shall I surely die,
doubt about this does not exist in me.

De Eerw. Sumangalo heeft gedurende vele jaren gewerkt aan de verspreiding van de Leer van de Boeddha in Nederland. Altijd stond hij klaar om mensen met raad en daad bij te staan, moge zijn hartelijke bereidwilligheid om de Dhamma met een ieder te delen altijd in onze herinnering blijven!

M E D I T A T I E - A K T I V I T E I T E N

AMSTERDAM:

maandag 18.00 - 20.00 uur
adres: Prinsengracht 475
Info: 020 - 264984.

GRONINGEN:

dinsdag 20.00 - 22.00 uur (zaal open 19.45 uur)
adres: "de Tuin", A-kerkhof Z.Z. 22

Weekenden: 8 - 9 - 10 november (met de Eerw. Mettaviharee)
13 - 14 - 15 december (eventueel met de Eerw. Mettaviharee)

tijden: vrij 20.00 - 22.00 uur
za 10.00 / 14.00 / 20.00 uur
zo 10.00 / 14.00 uur
plaats: de Tuin
kosten: zoals gewoonlijk fl 35,- of fl 7,50 per dagdeel. Wil je als je mee wil doen Hein even bellen?

Info: Hein 050 - 417184
Johan 719073

Aanmeldingsformulieren voor de retraite van november zijn in de Tuin op dinsdagavond verkrijgbaar, je kunt ook Johan bellen.

TILBURG:

vrijdag 20.30 - 22.00 uur
plaats: "Dhammavihari", Hoefstraat 217

weekenden: 26 - 27 oktober (met de Eerw. Mettaviharee)
tijden: za 10.00 / 14.30 / 19.30 uur
zo 10.00 / 14.30 uur
plaats: Dhammavihari
kosten: fl 45,- inklusief de maaltijden of fl 6,- per sessie

Dhammavihari is gevestigd in Hoefstraat 217, 5014 NL Tilburg. Te bereiken vanaf het station met buslijn 4 of 5 en te voet ongeveer 15 minuten lopen.
Info: 013 - 366570

UTRECHT:

donderdag 20.00 - 22.00 uur
adres: Sterrenhof 9 bis

I.p.v. weekenden is er een maandelijkse zondagsmeditatie. De sessies worden dan geleid door de Eerw. Mettaviharee of een van de meer ervaren mediterenden.

Data: 13 oktober
10 november
15 december
12 januari
tijden: 10.15 - 12.30 uur (je bent welkom vanaf 10.00 uur)
14.00 - 16.30 uur
kosten: fl 5,-
Neem een lunchpakket mee, voor koffie/thee wordt gezorgd
Info: Ciska 030 - 321472
Henk 520023
Aad 888655

VOORHOUT:

woensdag 19.00 - 21.00 uur
adres: Rijnsburgerweg 5

Info: Ronald 02522 - 10110

R E T R A I T E

De Eerw. Mettaviharee zal van 21 tot 30 november een intensieve retraite leiden.
Plaats: Ossendrecht
Aanmeldingen: bij Henk v. Voorst,
Rotsoord 24
3523 CL Utrecht
tel 030 - 520023
Men kan zich ook direkt aanmelden in Amsterdam of bij een van de bovengenoemde centra.

Weekenden in de Randstad:

het ligt in de bedoeling om vanaf januari weer in bv. Utrecht of Amsterdam weekenden met de Eerw. Mettaviharee te organiseren. Hierover zal in de volgende Vipassanā-sāra bericht worden.